

REMARKS

Enclosed please find a Petition for a one-month extension of time, a Request for Continued Examination (RCE) together with the appropriate fees.

Claims 1-23 have been cancelled. New claims 24-36 have been added.

New claims 24-36 largely represent the subject matter which was previously presented in now-cancelled claims 1, 3-6, 8, and 10-16, except that the order of the new claims has been changed to present a clearer format and certain amendments to the subject matter have been made. In particular, independent claim 24 is similar to the subject matter of claim 1, which is now cancelled, except that certain amendments have been made to the claimed socket. Claim 24 adds that, "the socket cut-out has a channel section open to the front and extending for the acceptance of the shaft, and a head cut-out to accept a toggle bar head."

Dependent claims 25-36 are similar to previously presented claims 3-6, 8, 10-16, except for certain amendments relating to the dependency or clarity of these claims, and correspond as follows: claim 25 represents previous claim 4; claim 26 represents previous claim 11; claim 27 represents previous claim 15; claim 28 represents previous claim 3; claims 29-30 represent previous claims 5-6, respectively; claim 31 represents previous claim 8; claim 32 represents previous claim 10; claims 33-35 represent claims 12-14, respectively; and claim 36 represents previous claim 16. It is respectfully believed that these claims are allowable over the prior art references, and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

As to the Section 112 rejection, any subject matter which was carried over into the new claims has been addressed for this rejection. No further correction is believed to be required.

As to the §102 rejection, applicants respectfully submit that new claims 24-36 are distinguishable over Klimeck 4,813,747. Klimeck discloses a face conveyor 1 with pans or trough sections 1A that are joined together by corresponding rack sections 2A. At the joint between adjacent rack sections 2A, Klimeck's assembly does not have symmetrical sockets. In Figures 3 and 4, the structure defining Klimeck's sockets includes a projection 7 located on one side of the joint and a recess 8 located on the other side of the joint. The projection 7 of one socket is received by the recess 8 of the other socket in a male-female type connection. Klimeck's sockets are therefore not symmetrical relative to the plane of symmetry which is aligned relative to the joint between the trough sections 1A. In contrast, claim 24 includes that the socket is symmetrical about a plane of symmetry which corresponds to the joint between the pans. Klimeck clearly does not anticipate claim 24.

Moreover, it would not be obvious to modify Klimeck's non-symmetrical sockets because Klimeck lacks any such teaching or suggestion. Klimeck's preferred embodiment requires the projections 7 and recesses 8 together with bearing surfaces 5 on the end faces of the rack sections 2A (Col. 3, lines 42-46). Klimeck states that the projections 7, recesses 8, and bearing surfaces 5 "function to take up the transverse forces exerted by the mining machine and transmit these forces to adjacent rack sections 2A" (Col. 4, lines 34-36). In this regard, Klimeck teaches and suggests that the projections 7, recesses 8, and bearing surfaces 5 are necessary to absorb excessive amounts of forces which are exerted on the rack sections 2A. Therefore, Klimeck specifically teaches that only non-symmetrical sockets are sufficient to absorb such forces. As such, claim 24 is distinguishable over Klimeck.

In addition, claim 24 is not obvious over the combination of Klimeck '747 in view of either Steinkuhl 5,033,604, Hauschopp 4,391,471, Hahn 5,224,582 or Merten

4,607,890. None of these references was relied upon by the Examiner for the rejection of the subject matter of claim 1, now largely represented as claim 24, which claim is the only remaining independent claim in this application. Rather, these references either formed the basis of rejection for subject matter recited in dependent claims or subject matter in independent claims which are now cancelled and not represented. Nevertheless, applicants respectfully submit that all of the cited references disclose and suggest toggle bar sockets which are not symmetrical, and as such, do not teach or suggest claim 24.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Renée C. Barthel", written over a horizontal line.

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